



Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



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Texas at heart of Amazon's AI push in United States

(AFP) - Austin, United States
Tech titan Amazon is working to step out of Nvidia's shadow with custom "Trainium" chips designed specially for machine learning as billions of dollars are poured into artificial intelligence (AI).

Amazon subsidiary Annapurna Labs in Austin, Texas, was testing the longevity of its latest generation Trainium during a recent visit by AFP to the facility.

Texas is emerging as a US tech world El Dorado, luring investments with cheap energy, relaxed regulations, tax incentives and reasonably affordable real estate for massive data centers.

Amidst a deafening roar, UltraServers packed with 144 of the Trainium AI-accelerator chips were being put through their paces



Employees work at Annapurna Labs in Austin, Texas, on February 3, 2026.

at Annapurna in a routine check prior to delivery.

After years of relying on suppliers for chips, the e-commerce powerhouse's Amazon Web Services

(AWS) cloud computing unit began designing its own, acquiring Israeli start-up Annapurna Labs in 2015. First came Graviton and Inferentia chips in 2018, the

former for general cloud computing and the latter for powering AI models.

The first Trainium debuted in 2020, followed by a second generation that touted a big boost in performance. Trainium 3 chips put into action in December are touted as doubling the capabilities of the second generation despite being smaller than a credit card. Kristopher King, head of the Annapurna lab in Austin, contended that the latest Trainium chips can cut the cost of developing and running generative AI models by as much as 40 percent compared to using graphics processing units (GPUs) that are now deemed the "gold standard" for AI.

Failure not an option
Along with pricing Trainium chips competitively, AWS is out to make reliability a selling point since data centers need to operate non-stop for long stretches at a time.

AI development requires hundreds of thousands of chips operating simultaneously for weeks, according to Annapurna head of engineering Mark Carroll.

"If there's a failure or unavailability during this

phase you have to go back, or even start from scratch," Carroll said.

Unlike other major players in AI processors, AWS doesn't sell its chips.

Instead, AWS uses Trainium exclusively in its own data centers, leasing computing capabilities to customers.

AWS opted to customize its chips to harmonize them with its software, particularly a Bedrock platform that lets customers choose from a wide range of competing AI models including Anthropic, OpenAI and other rivals, according to the lab.

Trainium is positioned as a cost-saving option in an AI market considered "supply constrained" because of insatiable appetite for high-performance GPUs from industry leader Nvidia and competitors such as AMD.

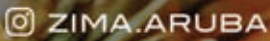
Even though Trainium 3 is only a few months old, Annapurna is already designing a new generation of the chip.

A launch date for Trainium 4 has yet to be disclosed, but Carroll says it will have six times the processing performance of its predecessor.

As Google, Microsoft, OpenAI, Meta and other tech rivals race to field ever-improved AI models, pressure is intense for chips to make the technology smarter, faster, cheaper and less power-hungry.

Nvidia began manufacturing its industry-leading Rubin graphics processing unit less than a year after the release of then top-of-the-line Blackwell.

The first version of Trainium took about 18 months to create, while the second generation was readied in nine months and Annapurna is "trying to maintain that pace", Carroll said.


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USS Gerald R. Ford: the world's biggest aircraft carrier

(AFP) - Washington, United States

The USS Gerald R. Ford -- the world's largest aircraft carrier -- is currently deployed in the Mediterranean Sea and is expected to take part in strikes against Iran if US President Donald Trump decides to launch them.

Washington has threatened military action against Tehran if talks fail to reach a replacement for the nuclear deal Trump tore up in 2018, and he has ordered the deployment of a massive military force including the Ford to the Middle East.

Below are some key facts about the aircraft carrier.



The US Navy aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford departs Souda Bay on the island of Crete on February 26, 2026.

Massive warship

The ship is the first Ford-class carrier -- a new design that will gradually replace older Nimitz-class ships and was commissioned by Trump in 2017. The \$13-billion vessel embarked on its first de-

ployment five years later in 2022. The carrier powered by two nuclear reactors displaces 100,000 long tons when fully loaded, is more than 1,100 feet (335 meters) long and can sail at

more than 34 miles (55 kilometers) per hour. The ship is crewed by more than 4,000 sailors, carries dozens of warplanes, and is currently accompanied by three guided missile destroyers.

Eight months at sea

The Ford has been at sea for more than eight months -- a deployment that has already seen it take part in US operations in the Carib-

bean, where Washington's forces have carried out strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats, interdicted sanctioned tankers and seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

The carrier has suffered significant problems with its toilet system while at sea, with US media reporting clogs and long lines for restrooms on the ship.

The issue is not new: a 2020 report from the US Government Accountability Office said the ship's toilet system was subject to "unexpected and frequent clogging" and requires acid flushes on a regular basis to clear it, at a cost of \$400,000 each time. The Navy acknowledged the reports of toilet problems in a statement on Thursday, but cited ship leadership as saying that "clog incidents are addressed promptly by trained damage control and engineering personnel, with minimal downtime." □

The sex lives of Neanderthal males - and human females

(AFP) - New York, United States

Dating out of your league? New research says it's a tale as old as time.

A study out Thursday in Science argues that Neanderthal men and human women were particularly inclined to mate, a sexual habit that offers insight into the evolution of the modern human genome.

In 2010 scientists reconstructed the Neanderthal genome -- blockbuster research that allowed for analysis making clear that the species interbred.

Most people living today

have some residual fragments of DNA from our ancient evolutionary cousins.

Research indicates both groups descended from a population living in Africa some million years ago.

They eventually diverged, with anatomically modern humans evolving in Africa, and Neanderthals migrating across Eurasia.

But over hundreds of millennia, human migrations resulted in interbreeding, researchers say.

Yet humans have little to no Neanderthal DNA on our X chromosomes -- one of two human chromo-

somes that determines an embryo's sex.

That was assumed to be the result of a natural selection.

The genes were biologically "toxic" to humans, researchers hypothesized, and eventually purged out in essence, the children who inherited those traits might not have lived to pass them on.

But the new study from geneticists at the University of Pennsylvania suggests the phenomenon has more social origins, and were actually the result of "long-standing mating preferences."

The team analyzed modern human DNA preserved in Neanderthals, and found

an abundance on the X chromosome the mirror opposite of humans. □



A picture shows the rebuilt skull and a physical reconstruction of the face and head, of a 75,000-year-old Neanderthal woman, named Shanidar Z, after the cave in Iraqi Kurdistan where her skull was found in 2018, at the University of Cambridge, eastern England, on April 25, 2024.

Brazil suspends cocoa bean imports from Ivory Coast

(AFP) - Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

Brazil has suspended the import of dried and fermented cocoa beans from the world's largest producer, Ivory Coast, where the sector is in crisis amid falling exports.

Brazil's agriculture ministry published a decree this week ordering the suspension, citing the risk of pests or diseases in cocoa beans coming from the West African nation, claiming its production includes "grains from neighboring countries."

It said the suspension will remain in place until Ivorian authorities provide guarantees that shipments do not contain beans from neighbors "whose phytosanitary status is unknown and



Dry cocoa beans are seen at the Sagarama farm in Coaraci, Bahia state, Brazil, on December 12, 2019.

whose export to Brazil is of unauthorised origin." Brazil produced almost 300,000 tonnes of cocoa in 2024, according to the latest figures from the national

statistical agency.

It imported 42,000 tonnes of raw and roasted cocoa in 2025 from Ivory Coast, according to Brazil's trade statistical agency.

The Federation of Agriculture and Livestock in Bahia, a major cocoa producing state in Brazil, said in a statement Tuesday that the decision to suspend imports was taken after a technical mission carried out in Ivory Coast earlier this month.

Ivory Coast currently faces major difficulties in selling its cocoa, hit by a slowdown in exports amid buyers' liquidity problems and a slump in global prices.

According to the World Bank, one in five people in Ivory Coast indirectly relies on cocoa to make a living.

Balkan 'forbidden' love comedy smashes stereotypes and records



Croatian film director Igor Seregi, director of the film "Svadb" ("Wedding"), poses during an interview with AFP in Zagreb on February 23, 2026.

(AFP) - Zagreb, Croatia
When two students in London tell their families they are going to get married, it should be one of the happiest moments of their lives. But there's a catch -- she is Croatian and he is Serbian. The rivalry between the two Balkan neighbours becomes comedy gold in the smash hit film "Wedding", which has audiences in both countries laughing at themselves. The Croatian-Serbian co-production mocks stereotypes of the two peoples who share a very similar language but who ended up fighting in a bloody war in

the 1990s when Yugoslavia, the country they shared for generations, collapsed. The young couple's families are horrified by the looming "mixed marriage".

The Croat Catholic father senses something is amiss when she calls to share the news that a baby is on the way only to learn the "shocking truth" that the father and future son-in-law is a Serb.

There's a similar reception on the Serbian side, where the grandmother calls her future in-laws "Ustasas", a slur alluding to Croatia's



A cyclist passes a billboard of the film "Svadb" ("Wedding") directed by Croatian filmmaker Igor Seregi, in Belgrade on February 26, 2026.

World War II pro-Nazi regime.

Most watched film ever The movie, called "Svadb" in Croatian, has become a box office phenomenon at a time when relations between Zagreb and Belgrade are among their lowest since the war.

In Croatia it has become the most-watched film ever, with nearly 700,000 people seeing it in just over a month one in five of the population sinking the three-decade-old record held by "Titanic" by around 200,000 tickets.

So far it has been seen by some two million people

across the Balkans and in Austria, Switzerland and Germany, which have large diaspora populations. Director Igor Seregi said its success showed people were missing the same thing: "Laughter -- to laugh at each other but also at ourselves.

"I think everyone recognised someone from their own family or wider circle and that resonated," Seregi told AFP.

He cast renowned actors from both nations in his "Romeo and Juliet" tale where the two fathers particularly struck a chord.

The politically-connected Croatian tycoon needs to expand into Serbia to avoid bankruptcy, while the father of the groom is a Serbian minister looking for funds from the European Union, of which Croatia is a member.

Marko Jovanovic, an administrator from Belgrade, told AFP that the comedy was a spot-on portrayal of the two countries' elites.

"A shady businessman with a gold chain and a politically connected schemer whose children study in London, felt almost like a documentary," he said.

'Strips prejudices bare' Ivana, a Serbian woman who married in Zagreb 20 years ago, loved it for stripping prejudices bare.

"The time has come for such a human story that reveals the reality beyond the politics," she said.

The movie gently mocks absurd traditions, the clergy and generational divides.

Loma, a psychology student from Zagreb, liked it for "poking fun equally at Serbian and Croatian society and their absurdities". □

Dogs, birds and a calf rescued after deadly rains in Brazil

(AFP) - Juiz De Fora, Brazil

Dogs, birds, and a mud-covered calf were among the animals rescued in southeastern Brazil where 55 people have died after torrential rains unleashed flooding and landslides.

Cities in the state of Minas Gerais were again on high alert Thursday as fresh rain fell, forcing a new scramble to rescue pets abandoned as residents fled in their thousands in the first wave of floods. "People have to run away and they don't have time to grab their pets. It's up to us to save them from the rubble, examine them, and then return them to their owners," veterinarian Marina Souza told AFP in the city of Juiz de Fora, where she rescued about 15 dogs on Thursday.

One of them, a dog named Benny, belonged to an 11-year-old boy who was killed in a landslide, she recounted, her voice trembling.

Alferina Maria, 45, had to leave her dog Paquito behind when she left her hillside home in the neighborhood of Tres Moinhos, but he was rescued by firefighters and returned to her on Thursday.

"They told us to just take our ID cards to get out of danger as quickly as possible, but I was worried about Paquito. He belonged to my late mother."

Another resident of the neighborhood, Gina Lourenço de Souza, 46, descended a steep, mud-covered alleyway carrying two cages full of birds.

When the landslide happened she only managed to take her cat and two cockatiels a kind of small parrot -- with her, leaving the rest of her "babies" behind.

"My mother, my daughter, my husband, and I are safe, but my family also includes furry and feathered friends," she said.

On Thursday, firefighters released a video of a calf covered in mud being rescued from a disaster zone.

Thirteen people are still missing after torrential rains late Monday caused landslides that buried dozens of people and unleashed flooding in the cities of Juiz de Fora and Uba.

Firefighters say there is all but no chance of finding them alive. □



In this grab obtained from a video released by the Minas Gerais Fire Department, a member of the Minas Gerais fire department rescues a dog from the rubble in Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais state, Brazil, on February 26, 2026.

Algeria archbishop welcomes pope visit as 'dream come true'

(AFP) - Algiers, Algeria

Pope Leo XIV's newly announced visit to Algeria in April was welcomed as a dream come true by the archbishop of Algiers on Thursday.

The trip will mark the first time a head of the Catholic Church has visited the North African Muslim-majority country.

"This dream of a pope visiting Algeria... has come true!" Jean-Paul Vesco, the Franco-Algerian cardinal of the Catholic Church who serves as the Archbishop of Algiers, wrote in a statement.

He added that the pontiff had come to see "the Algeria of today, a meeting point between north and south, east and west, the West and the Arab-Muslim world".

French-language newspaper El Watan said the "symbolic" visit was "of great



Pope Leo XIV waves to the crowd during the weekly general audience at St Peter's Square in the Vatican on February 18, 2026.

historical significance in a country where ancient Christian memory coexists with the Muslim reality of today".

Arabic-language newspaper El Khabar agreed the visit, which was announced by the Vatican on Tuesday, "carries a great symbolic and spiritual dimension". For Leo, the trip is in honour of fifth-century Saint Augustine, who was born in modern-day

Algeria and whose order he follows.

Leo, who was elected in May last year, will visit the capital Algiers and the city of Annaba where the Basilica of Saint Augustine stands from April 13 to 15.

The 70-year-old pontiff said the trip would allow him to "continue the discourse of dialogue and bridge-building between the Christian and the Muslim worlds". □

Car maker BMW to trial humanoid robots at German factory

(AFP) - Munich, Germany

German carmaker BMW said Friday it plans to deploy two AI-powered humanoid robots in a factory in a pilot programme for the first time this year. Dubbed AEON and developed by the Swedish company Hexagon, the black-and-white robots stand 1.65 metres (5.4 feet) tall, weigh 60 kilograms (132 pounds) and move on two wheels.

They can autonomously manipulate and move components within a factory where the space has been previously fully scanned and digitised. A months-long pilot phase will start this summer in a plant in Leipzig, with employees working alongside the vaguely human-like robots. The robot "has a full awareness of its environment" thanks to 22 sensors and various types of cameras, said Amaud



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and members of the delegation watch robots perform at a showroom of Unitec Robotics products in Hangzhou, in eastern China's Zhejiang Province on February 26, 2026.

Robert, president of Hexagon Robotics. Robert declined to disclose the price of the robots, but said it was in the hundreds of thousands of euros. The AI-powered robot is "intelligent enough to generate its own decisions" and operate "in a manufacturing environment", said Milan Nedeljkovic, BMW's incoming chairman and the current head of production. □

Cambodia welcomes back dozens of artefacts looted by UK trafficker

(AFP) - Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Cambodian monks chanted blessings and scattered flowers Friday over 74 cultural artefacts returned to the country after being plundered by a notorious British antiques smuggler.

Scholar Douglas Latchford -- once regarded as a key authority on Cambodian antiquities -- was charged by prosecutors in New York in 2019 with smuggling looted Cambodian relics to sell on the international black market.

Cambodia's culture ministry said the repatriation from Britain of the relics, some dating back more than around 1,000 years, was sealed in a deal with the estate of Latchford -- who died in Bangkok in



Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister Hun Manet attends a ceremony to welcome 74 cultural artefacts as they were returned after being plundered abroad by a notorious British antiques smuggler, in Phnom Penh on February 27, 2026.

2020.

Before the scandal came to light, Latchford earned acclaim for books detailing the art of the ancient Khmer Empire, which spanned

Cambodia and much else of Southeast Asia.

Deputy Prime Minister Hun Manet told reporters the return of the artefacts was a matter of "national pride" because the pieces "con-

nect the national soul from our ancestors' era to the current time".

The objects, to form part of the collection at the National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, include "monumental sandstone sculptures, refined bronze works, and significant ritual objects", said a culture ministry statement.

"These 74 sacred objects are not merely works of art; they are living witnesses to the genius of the Khmer ancestors and the spiritual heart of Khmer civilization," it added.

In 2024, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art returned 14 artefacts looted by Latchford, including a 10th century sandstone goddess statue and a large 7th century Buddha head.

Thousands of relics are believed to have been trafficked out of Cambodia over the years.

Experts say the trade thrived from the mid-1960s to the 1990s -- a period of instability that saw the anti-intellectual Khmer Rouge regime rise to power and left precious heritage unprotected.

Since 1996 Cambodian law has forbidden the unauthorised removal of antiquities, with a prison punishment of up to eight years.

Growing numbers of museums and private collections worldwide are facing pressure to repatriate artworks removed from their native countries, particularly those looted during periods of colonial rule. □

Scientists discover giant bird-like dinosaur in Niger desert

(AFP) - Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Deep in the desert of Niger, scientists have unearthed an unknown species of dinosaur, a giant fission of its kind in more than a century.

Around 95 million years ago, the Spinosaurus -- a massive beast with a blade-shaped head crest and interlocking teeth -- roamed the African continent.

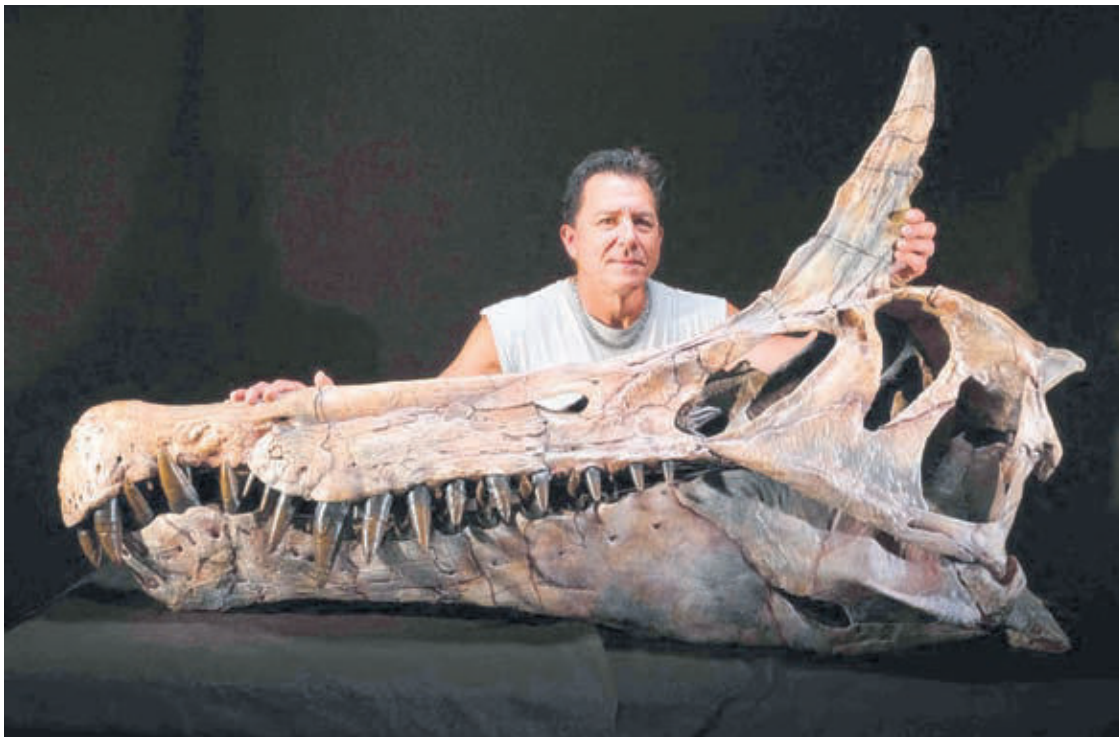
Scientists believe it rivalled the fearsome Tyrannosaurus rex in size, measuring around 40 feet long with a 20-inch sword-like crest on its head.

Researchers dug up fossils that belonged to the Spinosaurus mirabilis -- or "hell horn", in the words of Paul Sereno, the University of Chicago palaeontologist and lead author of the research published in the journal Science.

"Look at the length of the skull, the length of the neck, and the length of the hind limb -- you're in heron territory."

Spinosaurus mirabilis lived when forests and rivers covered the now-barren Sahara. Previously, most spinosaurid fossils had been found near coastlines in North Africa.

Some scientists thought



US paleontologist Paul Sereno poses at the Fossil Lab of the University of Chicago, Illinois, on September 19, 2025 next to the skull cast of the first dinosaur to be named from the Jenguebi fossil area in Niger, the Spinosaurid Spinosaurus Mirabilis.

these fish-eating creatures may have been fully aquatic, gliding through deep waters to snare prey. But this time, the fossils were discovered further inland, hundreds of miles from what would have been the nearest ocean.

"I think it was an animal that could have waded easily into the water," Sereno said.

"But I do not think it was a diver, I do not think it was a good swimmer."

'Earth-shattering site'

The search began in 2019 in the Sahara Desert, where French geologist Hugues Faure had said he found a tooth belonging to the giant predator Carcharodontosaurus in the 1950s. "We've got a couple of things that Faure could never dream of. We have GPS coordinates, we have drones and better vehicles," said Sereno.

The barren sands yielded nothing and the team, dis-

heartened, headed back to their camp.

But a Tuareg man in a black trench coat approached Sereno's team on a motorcycle, claiming to know where "big bones" lay.

After a long journey through the desert, Sereno worried they "had made a mistake".

"We jokingly said, are we still in Niger? I mean, we drove for a day and a half until we had no more gas to spare because we

wouldn't get back."

But eventually they reached a remote site where the "biggest bones... I have ever seen in my life" emerged from the ground. Far out in the desert, the researchers gaped at the six-foot-long femur, the jaw, teeth, and base of the crest.

In 2022, Sereno returned with a 100-person team and 64 Nigerien guards to excavate the "earth-shattering site".

They unearthed a skull, fragments of the hind legs and several crests.

"The crest was like nothing we'd ever seen before," said Sereno.

Some were brought to tears, he said, by the "overwhelming" experience.

"It's actually like looking at a digital image of your new dinosaur and gawking over it in the tent in the middle of the Sahara."

The team realised "it was a new species... and it was going to be a landmark discovery."

"That's your Jurassic Park moment... one to remember for a lifetime." □

Blackstone Beach



(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba; the stones that cover the beach and the shape of it has been crafted for thousands of years through volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family!

GAIA After Dark: An Evening of Refined Indulgence



Since its opening, GAIA House of Grill, located at JOIA Aruba by Iberostar, has captured attention and quickly become the talk of the town. This refined house of grill pays tribute to Gaia, the Greek goddess of Mother Earth, celebrating the perfect balance found in nature's finest offerings.

Overlooking the world-famous Eagle Beach, GAIA provides the ideal setting to savor bold flavors, breathtaking sunsets, a cozy ambiance, and impeccable service.

Now introducing Saturdays: After Dark, beginning at

10 PM, where dinner ends and the night begins. Once the restaurant closes, GAIA transforms into an intimate yet mysterious lounge, featuring handcrafted cocktails, exquisite late-night bites, and the vibrant energy of a live DJ setting the tone for the evening.

For those seeking a distinctive experience in a refined house of steak in Aruba, GAIA is the perfect destination to conclude your night. Don't miss this indulgent experience, reserve your table online or scan the QR code to discover GAIA After Dark.

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mission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from Bernadette Kozak from Old Orchard Beach, Maine. She wrote to us saying:

“Aruba to me is home. My husband Peter and I have been coming to Aruba since 1985. Years back then when we would get off the Plane on the Tarmac and have a photo taken with a greeter. It's our second home, and we are blessed to spend 2 to 3 months here now. We are here now at La Cabana until April 12th! We love Aruba and all the people here. Stay Hopi Bon.”

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!



Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, lime-

stone hill, “Sero Colorado” translates to “Colored Hill”. Sero Colorado has deep historic ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Ankok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area include the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person re-



sponsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the

area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, “San Nicolas” translates to “Saint Nicolas”, leading many to believe that this

district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as “Shon” by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas.

Source: “Aruba: Short History” by Dr. J. Hartog.

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Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) – Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Some-

times, due to the need of a quick “to-go” breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi bonch'i rabo (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), cami stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinnertime can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening “meal” can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.



(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di

pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo dicashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, baskets, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these

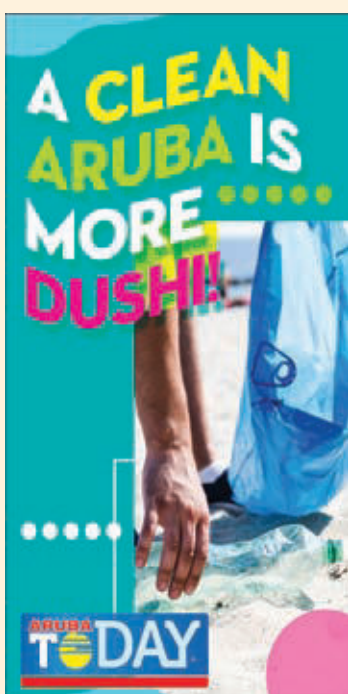
trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun.

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means “bag”. Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba



A guide for the perfect picture: Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Aruba

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're out and about on the island and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Aruba is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Aruba.

"I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in Mainstreet Oranjestad, check out the



wooden swing on Plaza Daniel Leo. This is another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram.

Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Mangel Halto

For a different take on beach photos, we definitely recommend Mangel Halto! You can get in the water right by the roots of these beautiful trees (please be careful not to climb them, though!). You will see beautiful skies, birds and other wildlife, and among the greenery of the mangroves, your picture is sure to pop!



Yacht Dock in Oranjestad

Last but certainly not least, the Yacht Dock in Oranjestad is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas!



Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!

Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Picuda", a very common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Picuda.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? This is an informative article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, known as "Santa Rosa", wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

Picuda, Sphyræna barra-



cuda, Greater Barracuda. Well known is the Picuda on the island—Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is *Sphyræna barracuda*. It is a widely caught fish. It is found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a

so-called "ambush predator" that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for its white flesh in fish soup.

In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

Description

The Picuda is a long fish, with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, the belly, is white, while the top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more "full" than that of mullet or cone-fish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets

close.

In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible without any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod, or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions.

Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of com rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecu-



Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same

place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvarez, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings

of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past.

Aruba's kite flying tradition



(Oranjestad)—Every year for King's Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to King's Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby mondi* and in the kitchen at home. Using dried up cactus sticks for the frame, old news papers, and glue made

from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use comstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends, parents or other close family members. Tails are made from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the back end of the kite. To finish off the process, people used fish lines

orthin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own designs—the more colorful, the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like emp-

ty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air.

*Mondi: Aruban woods.



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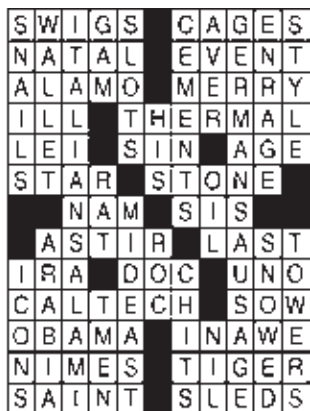
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

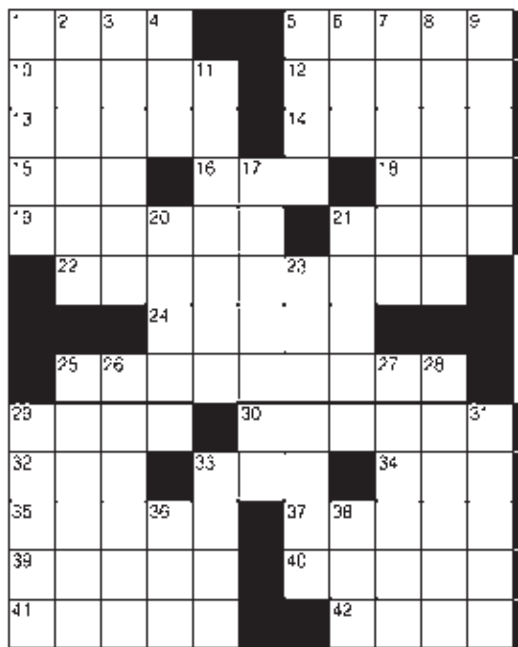
- 1 Travel chow
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DOWN

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12 Verdi work
13 Squelched
14 Casual fabric
15 Sense of self
16 Chart model
18 Look upon
19 Painter Georges
21 Takes in
22 Slam on the brakes
24 Boyfriends
25 Diamond position
29 One-sided victory
30 Stressed type
32 Radius setting
33 Salon stuff
34 Some crime evidence
35 Play place
37 Chris of "The Avengers"
39 Wine grape
40 Man of many words



- 11 In theory
17 Draw the mat
20 Metal man
21 — del Sol
23 Go-getter groups
25 Raid
26 Compas-sionate
27 Geriatrics
28 Beaten on
29 Grating
31 Play
33 Obtains
36 Jupiter or Neptune
38 Oath



3-11

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-11

CRYPTOQUOTE

I N A B A W A B R G A F N D Y R .

W I I M M R J A B L A W Q I F A Q B N Y .

— V N J H X A E H J N X N E A

Cryptoquote: THERE'S NOTHING MORE EMBARRASSING THAN TO HAVE EARNED THE DISFAVOR OF A PERCEPTIVE ANIMAL. — MICHAEL CHABON

Cruise ship Schedule: Feb. 25 - 28 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
WED	25	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	11.30	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
THU	26	AIDASOL	08.00	18.00	B	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
		COSTA PACIFICA	07.00	22.00	I	1
FRI	27	SILVER SPIRIT	08.00	21.00	B	1
		BRILLANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	C	1
		AURORA	07.00	23.00	I	1
SAT	28	ISLAND PRINCESS	08.00	17.00	B	1
		MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	C	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	I	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



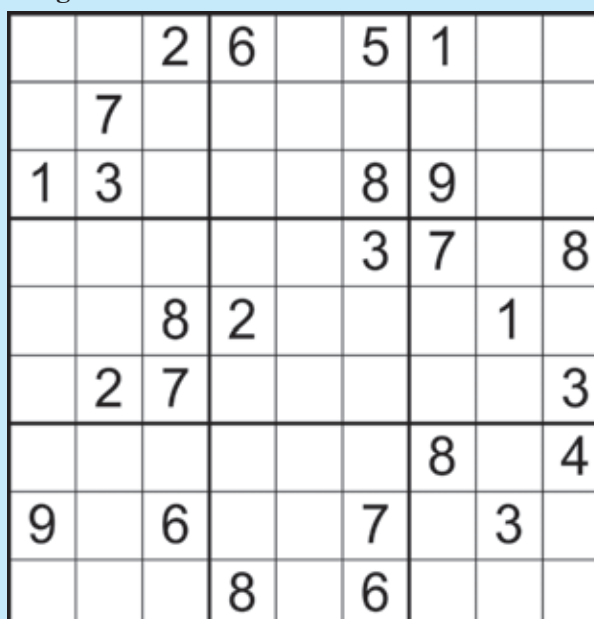
Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★★★

2/28

Answer to previous puzzle

9	2	8	5	3	1	4	7	6
6	1	3	7	8	4	9	5	2
7	5	4	9	6	2	8	1	3
8	9	6	3	2	7	1	4	5
1	4	2	8	5	9	6	3	7
5	3	7	4	1	6	2	9	8
4	8	9	6	7	3	5	2	1
2	7	5	1	4	8	3	6	9
3	6	1	2	9	5	7	8	4

Difficulty: ★★★★★

2/27

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Funny old world: the week's offbeat news

(AFP) - Paris, France

From the saddest, cutest monkey ever to AI going all mystical... Your weekly roundup of offbeat stories from around the world.

Punch to the heart

Celebrity doesn't just cast its spell on humans, it seemingly works its magic on monkeys too. Take poor little Punch, a baby macaque abandoned by its mother and bullied and cold-shouldered by other monkeys in a Japanese zoo.

Then images of Punch clutching a cuddly toy for comfort went viral under the hashtag #HangIn-TherePunch, with crowds thronging Ichikawa City Zoo outside Tokyo, many with presents to cheer him up.

Sales of his cuddly IKEA orangutan plushie also rocketed, selling out in Japan and the US.

With so many new fans, the zoo had to setup a "restricted zone" around part of his enclosure.

All the adoration seems to be rubbing off. Punch's stock has risen among the other monkeys, and he is being "meticulously groomed by two monkeys" in recent days and is "steadily fitting into the group", the zoo reported.

Snow joke

The Winter Olympics are over but the next one, or the one after, could be even more fun. Japanese officials want to turn snowball fights "yukigassen" into an Olympic sport.

"It's the oldest winter sport," said Yuji Ano, who organised its top tournament on the northern island of Hokkaido. "Long before skating or skiing, humans were already throwing snowballs at each other."

"When you get hit, it hurts, but it's mostly your pride that takes the blow," said Toshihiro Takahashi, a 48-year-old civil servant dripping with sweat after his match in which he had to hit the seven players on the opposing team with perfectly spherical snowballs made by a special machine.

Some, however, may



Players throw snowballs during the Showa-shinzan International Yukigassen snowball fight competition in Sobetsu, Hokkaido prefecture on February 21, 2026.



This photo taken on February 19, 2026 shows a seven-month-old male macaque monkey named Punch, who was abandoned by his mother shortly after birth, sitting with a stuffed orangutan toy at Ichikawa City Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Chiba Prefecture.

need some persuading of its merits. Just ask the New York police officers who were pelted with snowballs after the city's largest snowstorm in over a decade.

"Multiple uniformed officers were struck in the face with snowballs," a New York Police Department spokes-

woman told AFP, with the miscreants posting videos online to the fury of commissioner Jessica Tisch, who called them "disgraceful" and "criminal".

God knows why

Please try to stay zen. Japanese scientists have come up with a robot monk pow-

ered by AI. And "Buddha-roid" gave reporters some spiritual advice when it was unveiled at a Kyoto temple: don't go overthinking this.

"Buddhism teaches that it is important not to blindly follow one's thoughts or rush headlong into things," it said in a soothing baritone. "One approach is to calm your mind and let go of the thought."

Trained on some of the most esoteric Buddhist scriptures, researchers believe the holy humanoid could "replace some of the religious rituals traditionally performed by human monks".

Some have already turned to AI therapists for company or advice on their love life, but now the creators of the bots are pushing into the realm of the gods: a Kyoto and mid-called Mindara already delivers sermons, and a German robot with glowing hands gives blessings in five languages. □



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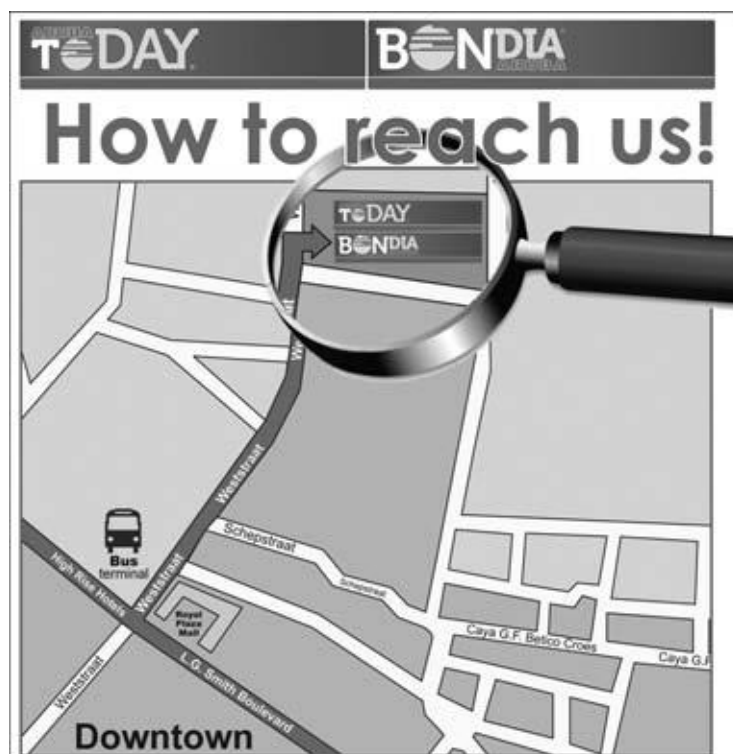
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

For Roberto Cavalli designer, dreams come in all black

(AFP) - Milan, Italy

Black may have been the colour chosen by Roberto Cavalli's creative director for the new women's collection at Milan Fashion Week, but Fausto Puglisi is hardly feeling negative.

The nearly all-black palette accentuated with romantic jolts of lilac and plum used by Puglisi Thursday night at Milan Fashion Week was instead a defiant statement for the label known for its bold, often aggressive colours and animal prints.

"I wanted the collection to be black because I still have my dreams," Puglisi told AFP backstage after the show, where a version of the Eurythmics' 1980s pop classic "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" accompanied the models down the catwalk.

Stiff embossed black leather on cropped jackets or skirts jutted out dramatically like mushroom caps while slouchy, low-slung trousers sewn from black vinyl shimmered like black liquid.



Models walk the runway during the Roberto Cavalli collection show at Milan's Fashion Week Womenswear Spring / Summer 2026, on September 25, 2025 in Milan.

The dark collection nevertheless celebrated lightness and texture, with a strong dose of seethrough black lace on tight sleeves, barely there slip dresses or paired with black velvet.

Persian lamb faux, of course had its moment, on trousers, coats, jackets and intermixed with black vel-

vet to form the ruffles of a long skirt paired with lace-up boots.

"It's fake," enthused Puglisi proudly of the glossy, tightly curled Persian lamb.

"I love animals, I would never use real fur."

'Continue to dream'

Puglisi recreated the look of fur, its wispieness and colour variations, by printing it on flowing fabric, while a long black form-fitting tunic used sheer cut-outs to reproduce the stripes of a zebra.

A mood board backstage showed Old Master floral still lifes, Roman centurion

breastplates and leather strips worn as armour, as well as black-and-white photographs of goth-like images and other inspirations.

Did Puglisi find it hard to be working in fashion in the current state of the world?

"I think it's important to create beauty. Always. It's like telling a director to stop, it's the same thing," he said, calling fashion, films and music "escapism".

"I think it's very important to keep creating with the vision of a child, with naivety and freshness," he added.

"I will not allow any dictator to stop my creativity. I continue to create and I continue to dream," he said.

To that effect, the last look of the night was a showstopper.

Its high necked top mixed lace, cut-outs and ruffles while its skirt looked like it had been sewn from a million black faux feathers. □

'Like riding a bike': Oscar nominee Ethan Hawke on the magic of 'Blue Moon'

(AFP) - Beverly Hills, United States

It's hard to recognize Ethan Hawke in "Blue Moon": he's short, bald, slightly greasy-looking and uncomfortable in his own skin. The role is a far cry from the dashing young leading man who wowed audiences when he broke

through decades ago with 1989 coming-of-age drama "Dead Poets Society" and Gen X classic "Reality Bites" a few years later.

But his portrayal of legendary lyricist Lorenz Hart, an alcoholic who drank himself out of one of America's most famous songwriting partnerships, is a

tour-de-force -- one that has landed the 55-year-old an Oscar nomination for best actor.

The dialogue-heavy chamber piece -- basically a theatrical play on celluloid -- is the fruit of Hawke's decades-long collaboration with director Richard Linklater, which began more than 30 years ago with 1995's "Before Sunrise."

"The magic to the relationship is that it's a little bit like riding a bike; you just don't think about it," Hawke told AFP.

"He sent me this script and the two of us just both felt this is one of the most incredible pieces of writing we'd ever come across," Hawke told AFP. "And we wanted to share it with the world."

"Blue Moon" takes place almost entirely in the bar of a Broadway restaurant where Hart takes refuge during the premiere of "Oklahoma!" the first major show his long-time collaborator Richard Rodgers created with Oscar Hammerstein.

Robert Kaplow's dense and literary script is utterly dominated by Hawke, who told one journalist he had more dialogue in the first 30 minutes of screen-time than in the entirety of his last four films.

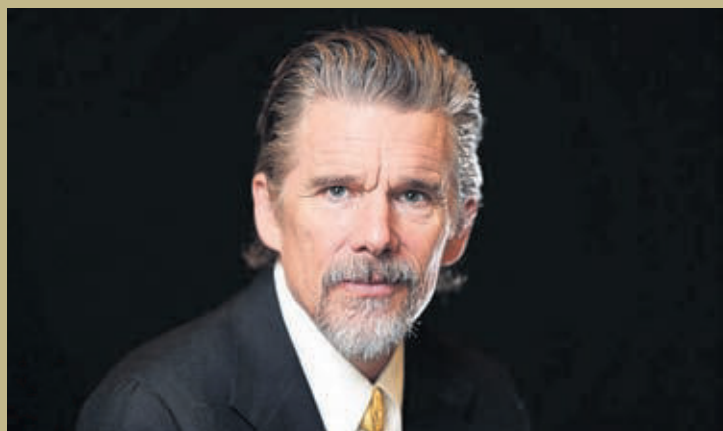
But, despite a bit of camera trickery and some digital effects, it is the physicality of a diminutive, balding and unattractive man that was a more time-consuming challenge for Hawke the work of a decade for a script he first read in 2014. "I didn't think I needed to

age into it, but Rick (Linklater) did," Hawke told trade title The Wrap.

"Rick knew that time was only going to help me. And funnily enough, it's not just aging, not just your face cracking and falling apart. I thought I was ready when I was 40, but I wasn't. 'I got more and more interested in what people call character acting. And this part required a lot of it, everything I've learned over 30 some-odd years."

'Mysterious'

Hawke credits his lengthy partnership with Linklater the pair announced last year they are working on a 10th feature together for allowing him the space to strip back every vestige of vanity and build himself into this oddball lyricist. □



US actor Ethan Hawke nominee for Best Actor for "Blue Moon" poses during a photo session ahead of the 98th Oscars Nominees Luncheon at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, California on February 10, 2026.

F1 hopes to fuel growth in North America with Netflix and Apple

(AFP) - Sakhir, Bahrain

Formula 1 is well anchored in the United States with its American owners and three Grand Prix races, but the sport hopes to push its growing popularity further with the help of Netflix and Apple.

The Netflix documentary "F1: Drive to Survive", which begins its eighth season on Friday, has already taken motorsport's top discipline into a new dimension.

The series provides a behind-the-scenes look at the sport's drivers, managers and team owners.

While critics complain that the series magnifies tensions between drivers and managers for entertainment value, it has introduced a younger audience, particularly women, to F1.

The documentary series



Alpine's French driver Pierre Gasly drives on the third day of the Formula One pre-season testing at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir on February 20, 2026.

and the additional races in the United States have been "seismic changes in terms of where we were as a sport," said Liam Parker, head of communications

for F1, which has been a subsidiary of US group Liberty Media since 2016.

Founded in 1991, Nasdaq-listed Liberty Media has

spent the last decade pushing hard to boost F1's audience in the United States, where NASCAR and IndyCar dominate.

52 million fans

"Drive to Survive" co-executive producer Tom Rogers believes F1 has enormous potential in the United States thanks to it now hosting three Grand Prix races -- in Miami, Austin and Las Vegas.

Out of F1's global audience of some 800 million viewers, only some 52 million are in the United States, according to Parker.

"We're not really scratching the surface in the US in terms of what we can do given the size of that audience," he said recently in Bahrain, where F1 held a series of pre-season tests.

The sport is also still basking in the success of "F1: The Movie" starring Brad Pitt. In addition to box office success last year, the film garnered four Oscar nominations, including for best picture. □

Turkish footballer hailed as hero after saving stunned seagull

(AFP) - Istanbul, Turkey

A Turkish amateur footballer has gone viral for saving a seagull's life with CPR after it was struck down during an Istanbul match.

Gani Catan, a 32-year-old accountant and captain of amateur club Yurdu Spor, raced across the pitch Sunday after a ball knocked the low-flying bird to the ground.

"I acted on instinct, or maybe I once saw someone do this on a dog or a cat," he told AFP a few days later as he watched the club's youth teams train.

As it hit the pitch, Catan leapt into action and started performing rudimentary CPR, pumping the bird's ribcage.

"When I started the chest compressions, it began moving its legs. The more

it moved, the more I kept going," he said.

When it started breathing, he carried it off the pitch to medical staff, who took care of it.

By that evening, videos had gone viral on social media and Catan said his phone began ringing non-stop.

"We'd lost the match, so I wasn't in a good mood. Then overnight the messages started coming in. We were shocked by how fast it spread," he said.

"It's been in the press in Brazil, Italy, America..."

Since the Istanbul match, Catan has received animal rights organisation PETA's "Hero to Animals award". Originally from the northern Turkish city of Tokat where he lives with his two cats, Catan had dreamed of playing football since childhood. □



A seagull stands on a rock in front of the Maiden's Tower at sunrise in Istanbul on August 9, 2025.

Premier League to branch out with new Singapore streaming service

(AFP) - London, United Kingdom

The Premier League will launch its first direct-to-customer streaming platform in Singapore next season, a service that could be "replicated all around the world" if successful.

Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said on Thursday the new channel would be known as "Premier League +".

This will be the first time the lucrative and globally popular English top-flight football competition has broadcast its own content, having always previously sold its rights to the likes of satellite broadcasters such as Sky Sports in the UK and the terrestrial NBC in the United States. □



Mauricio Pochettino, Manager of Chelsea, interacts with Richard Masters, CEO of Premier League with the Summer Series trophy after the Premier League Summer Series match between Chelsea FC and Fulham FC at FedExField on July 30, 2023 in Landover, Maryland.

‘Impressive’ Maguire has Man Utd future says Carrick

(AFP) - London, United Kingdom

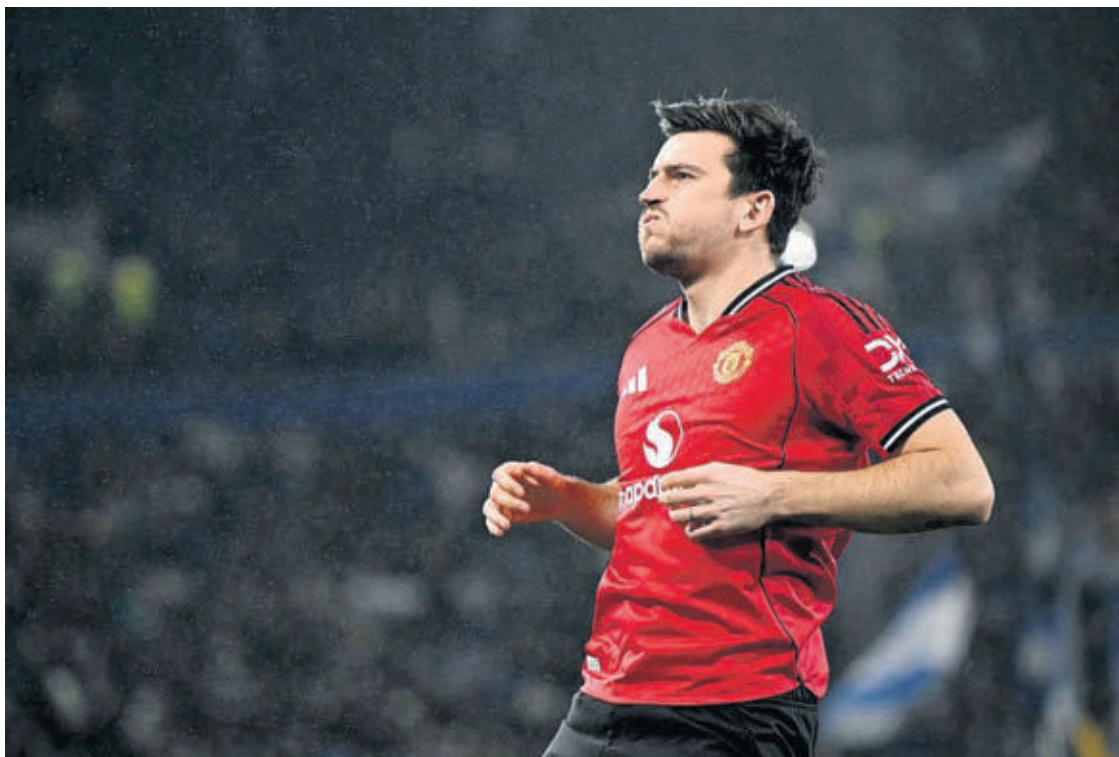
Michael Carrick insisted on Friday Harry Maguire has a long-term future at Manchester United as the “impressive” defender enters the final months of his contract.

Maguire has started every game since interim boss Carrick took charge in January, underlining his value to United with a series of strong performances in their recent revival.

The 32-year-old centre-back, signed from Leicester in 2019, is far from certain to be at Old Trafford next season after reports he would need to take a pay cut to extend his spell with the club.

But Carrick is convinced the England international still has a lot to offer.

“Harry’s an impressive character. He’s had a great career so far. Hopefully, there’s a lot more to come,” Carrick told reporters. “I think, even while he’s



Manchester United's English defender #05 Harry Maguire reacts ahead of the English Premier League football match between Everton and Manchester United at the Hill Dickinson Stadium in Liverpool, north west England on February 23, 2026.

been here, in the journey and the experiences that he’s had, certainly since he’s been here and with England as well, I think he’s shown exactly what he is.

“I think we all know the player that he is and what he’s capable of doing. Again, the other night I thought he

was fantastic. Experience helps, his attributes help, and his character.

“His willingness to put himself out there. He’s really impressive at his age and he’s been really important for us.”

United midfielder Casemiro

has already announced this will be his last season with the club.

The Brazilian veteran’s impending exit only adds to the value of Maguire’s experience within the squad.

“Experience is massive,” Carrick said. “It’s hard to

put a price on how valuable that can be. Harry has gained an awful lot of experience with this club.

“Casemiro leaving is another one and we have to understand what that means.”

Maguire’s importance has been heightened while Matthijs de Ligt remains sidelined with a back injury.

The Dutchman last played for United at the end of November, but what was first thought to be a minor issue has cost him a huge chunk of the season.

While Carrick said Mason Mount is “getting closer” after returning to training, there is still no timetable for De Ligt.

“Matthijs has had a back issue which has been a bit slow to progress, it’s something we’ve been working through, he’s in the right direction but a bit further behind,” Carrick said ahead of fourth-placed United’s match against Crystal Palace on Sunday. □

India aim for ‘fearless cricket’ ahead of West Indies showdown

(AFP) - Chennai, India

India revived their T20 World Cup campaign with their “fearless” brand of cricket ahead of a winner-takes-all decider against the West Indies for the last semi-final berth.

Hot favourites to defend their title on home soil, India thrashed Zimbabwe by

72 runs in Chennai on Thursday to bounce back from their heavy defeat against South Africa in their Super Eight opener.

India’s batting, led by opener Abhishek Sharma’s blistering 55, and an unbeaten 50 by Hardik Pandya, piled up 256-4, the second-highest total in the history of the tournament.

In a brutal show of power hitting, the Indian batters demolished the opposition bowling with 17 sixes and 17 fours at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

India face the West Indies, who went down to South Africa by nine wickets, in Kolkata on Sunday to decide the second semi-finalist from Group 1.

“We want to play the fearless cricket, the brand of cricket we played today and we played since last year,” batter Tilak Varma said.

“The same intent we want to keep in the next game as well. And going ahead in the tournament, we take the same intensity (forward).”

The left-handed Varma hit a 19-ball 44 as he put together an unbeaten 84-run stand with Pandya,

who capped off the innings with two sixes to raise his fifty.

It all came together for India after they rejigged their opening combination with the return of Sanju Samson, who handed the team a quick start with his 24 off 15 balls.

The left-handed Abhishek hit form with his first T20 World Cup fifty after he struggled in the tournament with three ducks in four innings.

“It’s important when the openers give us a good start, the same confidence follows to number three, four and five,” said Varma.

“And we discussed that whatever the situation is, (even) if we lose three-four wickets in powerplay, we will bat with the same rhythm,” he added.

“And we want to show the

fear in opposition bowlers, that these guys are ready to hit each and every ball.”

- ‘Keep that intensity’ -

India, the world’s top-ranked T20 team, came into the World Cup on the back of huge totals in bilateral contests, and were tipped to cross the 300-run mark at the tournament.

But their batting had looked fragile and was often exposed, including by minnows the United States, who reduced them to 77-6 in their opener.

Varma remains cautious of his team’s plans against the West Indies, who posted 254-6 against Zimbabwe in their Super Eight opener.

“So if the wicket is not good, then we’ll adjust, and we’ll keep that intensity on,” said Varma. □



India's Tilak Varma looks on during the 2026 ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup Super Eight match between India and Zimbabwe at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on February 26, 2026.